

**Testimony of Morgan Michael**  
**Library Associate II - Adult Services, Bel Air Branch**  
**Harford County Public Library**  
**Before the Senate Finance Committee**  
**March 20, 2024**  
**HB609 Education - Public Libraries - Collective Bargaining**  
**(Library Workers Empowerment Act)**

**FAVORABLE**

Good afternoon, Senator Beidle, Senator Klausmeier, and the esteemed members of the Finance Committee. My name is Morgan Michael, and I've been a Library Associate II in Harford County Public Library for almost seventeen years.

For three years we've worked with IAM to get a bill passed, enabling public library workers across the state to access their constitutional right to form a union.

While I am drained and heartbroken over the deterioration of my system, my passion for libraries and the service work we provide has not faded. The spirit of libraries resides in the workers - highly educated professionals who are often mistaken for volunteers. We need to be our own voice, to have the ability to advocate and fight for changes within the systems that are choosing to neglect us. We're underpaid and underappreciated, while the need for our service expands and increases throughout communities across the country.

Channels of communication to the administration and Board of Trustees in my system may appear open, but they are convoluted and often only a mirage. We're

left uninformed about changes, confused about policies that change on a whim, and overworked thanks to staffing shortages. Morale is at an all time low. Based on the number of public library workers ready to hold union elections, it's clear Harford's is not the only system with issues that need resolving.

I'm asking for the passage of HB 609, because without it, library workers across the state will continue to experience enormous disrespect from their employers.

The libraries of our future depend upon the workers in them right now. Without this bill, we are hopeless for change. Thank you for your time and your support..